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ABSTRACT

Noting that adolescents' academic achievement depends, to a large degree, on adolescents' motivation, this chapter takes an achievement goal theory perspective to show how the manner in which adolescents adopt differing achievement goal orientations provides a framework for understanding the processes that contribute to their adoption of adaptive motivational orientations. This chapter begins with a summary of developments in the study of motivation over the past 20 years, focusing on the emergence of achievement goal theory and tracing the relationship between goal orientations and processes such as the use of effective and ineffective learning strategies, adoption of positive and negative attitudes toward school and learning, and engagement in cooperative and disruptive behavior. In particular, the chapter shows how adoption of mastery or performance goals may be viewed as aspects of the process of self-reconstruction in which adolescents engage, serving the development of their personal interests, establishing the basis of their self-worth, and forming desirable social relationships. Next, the chapter presents a model that situates students' motivational orientations in the sociocultural context of their schools, and discusses its implications to theory, research, and educational practices. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the model for understanding motivation in adolescence. (Contains 168 references.) (KB)

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CHAPTER 5

ADOLESCENTS' ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

Situating Motivation in Sociocultural Contexts

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Achievement, especially *school* achievement of adolescents, is a major concern of parents, educators, indeed of society as a whole—and, sometimes, also the concern of adolescents themselves. Doing well in school involves taking responsibility for action and outcome, something that often is not automatic or inevitable. In most cases, it involves a decision to do what has to be done and persist at it. In other words, to a large degree, achievement depends on motivation. The study of motivation and its relation to achievement begins with and is anchored in the observation of variation in actions that involve making choices, exerting effort, and persisting. In turn, motivation theory is designed to explain and predict this variation, and ultimately also to provide insights to those who attempt to motivate others. An important test of motivation theories, therefore, is their usefulness to inform teachers, parents, coaches, youth leaders, counselors, and therapists, indeed all those who make their business to empower and encourage people to "do what needs to be done."

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In this chapter we summarize developments in the study of motivation of the last two decades, particularly focusing on the emergence of a theory that has become one of the influential theories of achievement motivation in education: achievement goal theory. Our chapter begins with the origin of achievement goal theory and with a brief review of research findings of the last two decades. We continue with a review of recent theoretical developments that have challenged the original formulation of the theory. We then present a model that situates students' motivational orientations in the sociocultural context of their schools and discuss its implications to theory, research, and educational practice. We conclude the chapter with the implications of the model to understanding motivation in adolescence.

ACHIEVEMENT GOALS: THE SITUATED MEANING OF ACTION

Two decades or so ago, a decided shift occurred in the study of motivation, especially achievement motivation. Up to and through the 1960s and 1970s, motivation was viewed in "dynamic" terms (McClelland, 1961). That in general meant that a hydraulic machine was the metaphor of choice and the preferred causal constructs were needs and drives. Motivation was largely construed as an unconscious process residing in the deepest recesses of the autonomic system and only barely cerebral. Cognitions associated with motivation were, in a phrase, "afterthoughts," not primary causes. Furthermore, the focus was on developmental origins, mostly during the first years of life. With that, there was a special concern with individual differences and little concern with contexts. It was a period of emphasis on "trait" rather than "state" (Maehr, 1974), with particular attention being given to individual differences with "personality" designated as the primary source of motivated behavior. There were other voices, of course (e.g., Festinger, 1942; Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, & Sears, 1944). Nevertheless, any brief characterization of the period would have to recognize a predominant focus on individual differences and on largely unconscious dynamics.

However, the insights of those looking beyond personality began to take hold; increasingly, attention was given to cognitive processes. One of the most important theoretical developments to emerge as a result was the adoption of attributional reinterpretation of achievement motivation put forward by Weiner and others (see Weiner, 1985, 1986). And alongside attributions, the importance of cognition in motivation was notably promoted by a return to the consideration of concepts of self as a source of motivation (cf. Bandura, 1986; Wylie, 1968; see also Baumeister, 1998). The case could be made that in the early phases of the "cognitive revolution," the motivational construct of choice revolved around the concept of

self: one's general sense of competence, perceived efficacy or expectations of success and failure in a specific case, and internal or external attributions associated with success and failure.

In noting how achievement attributions varied with gender and culture, there emerged a parallel concern with values and ultimately purposes, intentions, and goals (e.g., Maehr & Nicholls, 1980). As it turned out, the concern with goals became more than an incidental part of the picture. In fact, research on achievement motivation has shifted significantly toward a focus on the purposes that individuals hold as a major if not the predominant causal factor (Ames & Ames, 1984; Maehr & Pintrich, 1991; Pervin, 1989). The prominence of the term goal and issue of purposiveness in general emerged in a variety of different forms (see Austin & Vancouver, 1996). Elliot and Sheldon (1997) have recently portrayed the motivational landscape traversed by goals, identifying "four basic variants, or levels, of goal representation." They define these as follows:

> (a) *task-specific* guidelines for performance, such as "Make this free-throw" (Bandura, 1986; Harackiewicz & Sansone, 1991; Locke & Latham, 1990); (b) *situation specific* orientations that represent the purpose of achievement activity, such as "Demonstrate my competence relative to others in this situation" (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1991; Nicholls, 1989); (c) *personal* goals that represent idiographic, personalized achievement pursuits that often transcend particular situations, such as "Get good grades" (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987; Emmons, 1989; Klinger, 1977; Little, Lecci, & Watkinson, 1992); (d) *self-standards* and *images of the self in the future*, such as "Someday I will be a college graduate" (Higgins, Strauman, & Klein, 1986; Markus, Cross & Wurf, 1990... Cantor & Zirkel, 1990; Dweck, 1992; Harackiewicz & Sansone, 1991). (p. 171)

Each of the four goal concepts identified by Elliot and Sheldon provides insights into the processes that contribute to individuals choosing to act in a certain way. They differ in their level of specificity and in the roles that they assign to the characteristics of the person and of the situation. As such, each concept contributed to a literature concerned with somewhat different theoretical processes—literatures that in many ways complement each other. In this chapter we focus on the perspective most closely identified with that defined in (b) above, which defines goals as situated orientations that represent the meaning of achievement and the purpose of action in situations. This perspective on goals proved very useful in guiding theoretical and empirical investigations into the processes that lead students to act in ways that contribute to achievement. The large and diverse literature that emerged from this perspective was labeled "achievement goal theory" (Ames, 1992a; Dweck, 1986; Maehr, 1984; Nicholls, 1984).

Achievement goal theory emphasizes the meaning that students construct *vis-à-vis* the achievement situation. Of particular significance is the aspect of meaning that concerns the purpose in acting: Why should one do it? Is the activity worth doing in its own right, or is it primarily instrumental to achieving a reward or recompense? Is the task "intrinsically interesting" or is it done in anticipation of social recognition or approval? Research in achievement goal theory investigated how such different purposes for task engagement make a difference in the thinking, feeling, and action exhibited. Thus, in addition to considering the question, "Are students motivated?," achievement goal theorists have asked "*Why* are students motivated?" They have found enough empirical evidence to indicate that purpose may be especially important for the quality of action, feeling, and thought.

Mastery and Performance Goals

Early on, two purposes for engaging in schoolwork were identified that became central in framing research and theory to the present. One was variably labeled mastery goals, task goals, or learning goals, and the other variably labeled performance goals, ego goals, or ability goals (Ames, 1992a; Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984). Ames (1992a) emphasized the convergence among the various constructs and in this chapter we adopt her terminology for these goal orientations—mastery and performance goals.

Generally, mastery goals refer to a focus on developing competence, making progress, and achieving mastery of the material and of the task. Success in the case of mastery goals is defined in relation to the task—that is, making progress on, or completing, a task successfully through investment of effort, understanding, and use of skills. Progress is measured in self-referential terms—that is, by evaluating improvement over previous performance (Ames, 1992a; Nicholls, 1984). In a learning situation, pursuing mastery goals takes the form of learning for the sake of learning (Ames, 1992a). Students exhibit mastery goals, for example, when they are working diligently on an interesting task and are experiencing the excitement of learning a new skill or acquiring new knowledge.

Research has shown consistent findings with regard to the positive consequences of being mastery oriented. The pattern of behavior associated with mastery goals is, therefore, considered adaptive and is often referred to as a "mastery pattern" of coping (e.g., Ames, 1992a; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Results from studies using multiple methods (survey, experimental, qualitative) in various contexts (laboratory, school, sports, sales) and with various age samples indicate that mastery goals are associated with positive

outcomes such as self-efficacy; preference for challenging tasks; persistence in the face of difficulties; use of adaptive cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational strategies for learning and self-regulation; adaptive help-seeking behavior; attributions of success to effort, interest, and strategy use; and positive attitude and affect in relation to self, context, and task (see Ames, 1992a; Covington, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot, 1999; Kaplan, Middleton, Urdan, & Midgley, 2002; Pintrich, 2000a, 2000b; Urdan, 1997, for reviews).

In the case of performance goals, the focus is especially on demonstrating competence (Ames, 1992a; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984). Since already at childhood, students understand that level of ability depends on normative performance (Nicholls, 1990), in many cases performance goals involve an orientation toward social comparison, and the demonstration of competence is done relative to that of others. In this regard, the understanding that effort and ability are inversely related directs attention to comparison not only on level of achievement but also on investment of effort (Nicholls, 1984). Thus, success in performance goal terms can be defined as achieving or surpassing normative standards, as in demonstrating that one is "smarter," or not less smart, than others, or as succeeding with little effort (Ames, 1992a). A central aspect of performance goals is, therefore, a concern with the *impression* that the person is making on others with regard to normative competence (Nicholls, 1989). These goals are evident, for example, in students' focus on grading and on comparing grades—a focus that is apart from the inherent purpose of schooling: learning.

Early in the development of goal orientation theory, theorists noted that the pursuit of performance goals does not result in similar behavior for all individuals. Nicholls (1984) and Dweck (1986) differentiated between performance-oriented individuals who have high perceived ability and those who have low perceived ability. While the former were predicted to be primarily oriented toward demonstrating their high ability, the latter were predicted to be primarily oriented toward *avoiding* demonstrating their *lack* of ability. This difference in focus manifested in a "mastery" pattern of behavior for the individuals with high perceived ability (similar to mastery-oriented individuals) and a "helpless" pattern of behavior for those with low perceived ability (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Nevertheless, most theory and research have treated performance-oriented students with high and low perceived ability as having the same motivational orientation "in which individuals seek to maintain positive judgments of their ability *and* avoid negative judgments" (Elliott & Dweck, 1988, p. 5, emphasis added).

Generally speaking, research findings in the case of performance goals have been less consistent than those found in the case of mastery goals. More often than not, performance goals have been associated with a less

adaptive pattern of cognition, affect, and behavior than have mastery goals. Several studies found endorsement of performance goals to be associated with such outcomes as avoidance of challenging tasks, academic self-consciousness (e.g., being afraid to make mistakes publicly), test anxiety, negative emotions following failure, avoidance of help seeking, and use of ineffective learning strategies; and to be negatively associated with self-efficacy and use of effective learning strategies. Other studies, however, found no association, weak, or even moderate associations between performance goals and positive outcomes such as self-efficacy, effective learning strategies, adaptive help-seeking behavior, and positive attitudes and affect (see Ames, 1992a; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1989; Urdan, 1997, for reviews).

Cross-Cultural Generalizability of Mastery and Performance Goals

In recent years, as goal orientation theory was found to be a useful explanatory framework for achievement behavior among white, middle-class North American students, researchers from other cultures explored its applicability to their own societies. Initially, the structure and associations were replicated among other "European-oriented" societies such as England and France (Biddle et al., 1995), Norway (Skaalvik, 1997), Jews in Israel (Butler, 1993), and European Australia (Archer, 1994; McInerney, 1995). Soon after, however, replications were conducted with increasingly diverse cultural groups such as African American students (Kaplan & Maehr, 1999; Midgley, Arunkumar, & Urdan, 1996); Japanese workers (Shwalb, Shwalb, Harnisch, Maehr, & Akabane, 1992); Greek students (Papaioannou, 1994); Aboriginal-Australian, Navajo, and Montagnais Betsiamite Indian students (McInerney, Roche, McInerney, & Marsh, 1997); Chinese students and athletes (Maehr, Shi, Kaplan, & Wang, 1999; Xiang, Lee, & Solmon, 1997); and United Arab Emirate students (Albaili, 1998).

Most studies conducted with students of different cultures confirm the meaningfulness of mastery and performance goals among the different cultural groups, and also support the relations between these goal orientations and correlates such as cognitive strategies and achievement. Of course, it is important to note that the general emphasis of cross-cultural research conducted until now has been on the similarities rather than the differences in achievement goal profiles and correlates across cultural groups. Furthermore, as with most studies on achievement goals, much of cross-cultural research investigating the generalizability of these orientations used survey methodology. Such research tends to look for the similarities among groups and disregards indications of possible uniqueness of

the meaning of goals (e.g., McInerney et al., 1997). Nevertheless, some of this research did find indication of different processes associated with achievement goals in different ethnic and cultural groups. McInerney and colleagues (1997), for example, found that as a group, Navajo students had a higher tendency towards mastery goals than students of other groups participating in the study, whereas Anglo Australian students were less performance oriented than the others. McInerney, Hinkley, Dowson, and Van Etten (1998) found that, whereas the structure of achievement goals appeared to be very similar among Aboriginal, Anglo, and immigrant Australian high school students, there were some indications of differences in levels of endorsement of the different orientations between the Aboriginal students and students of the two other groups. Furthermore, there were some differences among students in the three groups in responses to questions that asked them to think about the achievement goals that would contribute to the success of other students in school.

Looking at the mediating processes between achievement goals and outcomes, Kaplan and Maehr (1999) found some indication of different patterns of relationships between achievement goals and self-efficacy among European American and African American students. Such findings of differences suggest that there is still much to be learned about the generalizable and unique aspects of achievement goals within different cultural groups. Indeed, as one of the fundamental processes that is underlying achievement goals concerns the meaning of action in context, it is likely that cultural factors would play an important role in influencing, for example, the prevalence of a certain achievement goal within a cultural group, or the emotional associations with achievement goals (e.g., the competitive-oriented performance goals; see Maehr & Nicholls, 1980). Indeed, some recent research that employed qualitative methods to investigate the meaning of motivational beliefs in different sociocultural contexts (e.g., Bempechat & Boulay, 2000) raised some challenges to the original framework of achievement goal theory. We elaborate on this and other developments later in the chapter.

Antecedents of Mastery and Performance Goals

Both mastery and performance goals are variously viewed as state and/or trait variables. As a trait variable, these goals are viewed as relatively enduring thoughts or orientations toward action that distinguish individuals and determine their action across a wide variety of achievement domains and contexts (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). As such, one might surmise that achievement goals could be traced to early socialization experiences influenced, for example, by childrearing practices or the nature of kindergarten and

school settings (e.g., Heyman, Dweck, & Cain, 1992). In fact, however, little research has been specifically directed to this issue.

Conceptualized as dispositions, mastery and performance goals have been thought to be the purposes associated with different theories of intelligence (Dweck, 1999) or of success in education (Nicholls, 1992). When students understand intelligence to be an innate and fixed trait ("entity theorists"), they are more likely to adopt goals of demonstrating that they have much of this trait or engage in avoiding demonstrating their lack of it—performance goals. In contrast, when students understand intelligence to be a malleable quality that can be enhanced with effort, they are more likely to adopt goals of increasing and developing it—mastery goals (Dweck, 1999). Alternatively, mastery goals are perceived to be an integral aspect of students' theory of education that involves the beliefs that success in school involves being interested, investing effort, collaborating with others, and mastering knowledge. Performance goals are associated with the beliefs that success in school is achieved through being smart and attempting to outdo others (Nicholls, 1992).

However, when viewing mastery or performance goals as a state variable, the origins are as often as not attributed to immediately experienced situations (e.g., what is stressed in the school attended), though the role of individual differences in dispositions to achievement goals is not precluded (see Nicholls, 1992). Mastery and performance goals have been manipulated in the laboratory by focusing students on the possibility of gaining understanding and skills in the task versus on the evaluation of their performance relative to others, respectively. More broadly, various characteristics of the learning environment have been pointed to as facilitating the adoption of mastery or performance goals (Ames, 1992a, 1992b). For example, providing students with a choice among tasks, providing feedback on effort and improvement, and emphasizing collaboration is thought to facilitate mastery goals, whereas emphasizing speed of performance rather than deep processing, providing public recognition and evaluation of such performance, and encouraging competition among students for grades is thought to facilitate performance goals (Ames, 1990, 1992b; Maehr & Midgley, 1991, 1996).

Theorists tend to vary in the degree to which they focus on or emphasize trait or state characteristics of achievement goals. To date, researchers have provided multiple models of the origins of achievement goals, yet not a clear and generally convergent picture (see Kaplan & Maehr, 2002).

Assessment and Research Methods

Along with the dual trait/state usage, mastery and performance goals have been treated primarily in two ways in reported studies. First, they have been treated as a state or situated variable that can be created or primed by certain experimental manipulations. These manipulations essentially consist of statements that describe the purpose of the task as learning, making progress, and as individual and personal growth focused in the mastery condition; or as an opportunity for demonstrating ability, and as an evaluative situation in the performance condition.

Second, it is currently especially common to assess the existence of mastery and performance orientations with inventories using Likert-type scales. Researchers have experienced considerable success in developing reliable measures of achievement goals and in predicting a wide range of (self-reported) behavior from the type of orientations reported. These two research procedures seem to imply different views on the nature of goal orientations, including differences in the stability and situated nature of goal orientations—an issue that to date has gone largely unaddressed in the literature but will be specifically attended to later in this chapter. Thus, the origin of mastery and performance goals and their measurement still present open domains of inquiry. Particularly, the roles of context, social processes, and individual traits have yet to be effectively combined in a theoretical framework that incorporates and untangles conflicting findings from different research paradigms (see Kaplan & Maehr, 2002).

Applying Achievement Goal Theory to Motivational Change in Education

The parsimonious powerful framework of achievement goal theory led researchers to use it as a guide for educational change that aims at facilitating students' adaptive motivation. The convergent research findings of two decades that strongly suggested that mastery goals are adaptive, whereas performance goals may be sometimes maladaptive, have focused such interventions on changing characteristics of the learning environment in ways that increased emphasis on mastery goals and de-emphasized performance goals (e.g., Ames, 1990; Maehr & Midgley, 1991, 1996). Generally, these programs involve a collaborative effort by researchers and educators that focuses on the evaluation of the meaning that educational practices in the school setting seem to send to students. Then, decisions are made to replace practices that suggest that school is about performance rather than about learning, mastery, and making progress. A few of these interventions employed Epstein's (1989) structural analysis of the classroom as a useful

framework for pointing to contextual domains that influence achievement goals (Ames, 1992b; Maehr & Midgley, 1991). The dimensions, for which Epstein used the acronym TARGET, include the academic *Task*, the distribution of *Authority* in the classroom, the *Recognition* system, *Grouping* practices, the system of *Evaluation*, and the way *Time* is managed. Ames (1992a, 1992b) points to environmental strategies concerning each of these domains that teachers can use to increase students' mastery goals. The experience of these interventions clearly suggests, however, that it is desired that change of practices would be comprehensive—that is, in all of the TARGET domains—and involve a strong commitment of the management and teachers to make such a change of their school culture (see Maehr & Midgley, 1996; Urdan, Midgley, & Wood, 1995).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ACHIEVEMENT GOAL THEORY

The two-goal framework that positions mastery and performance goals in comparison to each other has been a fruitful and parsimonious framework for understanding students' motivation and its relation to contextual characteristics (see Midgley, 2002). However, as research into the nature and correlates of goals has continued, there has been increasing criticism of this dichotomous conceptualization—criticism that raises questions with regard to the educational implications that researchers have derived from achievement goal theory. The criticism seems to emerge from several lines of theory and research, prominent among which have been the identification of additional goal orientations, the introduction of approach–avoidance motivations into achievement goal theory, the consideration of multiple achievement goals, the emergence of complex person x situation interactions, and the emphasis on grounded theory in exploring the characteristics of students' motivation in school. All of these have important implications for the understanding of students' motivation in school and for the practice of facilitating adaptive engagement in schoolwork.

Additional Goal Orientations

One of the earlier conceptualizations of achievement goal theory suggested that engagement in achievement tasks could be motivated by purposes other than those that concern competence (Maehr, 1984). Specifically, findings from research that investigated the meaning of achievement to individuals (see Maehr & Nicholls, 1980; Maehr & Braskamp, 1986) suggested that tangible extrinsic rewards (e.g., money or

privileges) and social gains, such as approval from significant others or a desired social interaction, are important motivations in achievement contexts. Either of these desirable results can be conceptualized as a reason for engaging in and performing on an achievement task. Whereas these goals, which are not associated with competence per se, were frequently mentioned, they were mostly overshadowed by mastery and performance goals, and have been mostly neglected in the research on achievement goals in the past two decades. The reasons for this neglect are not so clear. Perhaps these noncompetence goals did not fit with the other programs of research that contributed to achievement goal theory. However, particularly in the case of social goals, research employing qualitative methods has suggested that these orientations are often associated with achievement. Since both social and extrinsic goals are perceived to involve criteria for success (or failure) external to level of task performance, some researchers have chosen to incorporate them into the performance goals category (e.g., Nicholls, Patashnick, & Nolen, 1985; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993). Recently, however, several researchers called for the recognition of these goal orientations as important purposes for students' behavior in school (e.g., Dweck, 1996; Urdan & Maehr, 1995). Indeed, Dowson and McInerney (2001) went as far as to suggest that "social goals may actually be more salient and predictive of students' global motivation and achievement than either mastery or performance goals" and that "it is possible that researchers have got it wrong in putting the emphasis on mastery and performance goals" (p. 40). This may be particularly important to consider in adolescence, a period in which social relations with peers take on an increased significance (e.g., Kegan, 1982).

The renewed interest in extrinsic and social goals resulted with attempts at defining them as distinct from mastery and performance goals (e.g., Midgley et al., 1998; Urdan & Maehr, 1995) and at exploring in more depth the various subgoals that may provide reasons for engagement, particularly in the social goal category. Thus, for example, Urdan and Maehr (1995) suggested the following social reasons as possible achievement goals when engaging (or avoiding engaging) in a task: gaining approval from others, complying with group values and norms, establishing social solidarity, and pursuing issues of social concern (see also Dowson & McInerney, 2001). Other goals that have been suggested include social responsibility, such as to be dependable and a good citizen, social status, and intimacy[1] (e.g., L. Anderman, 1999; Wentzel, 1992).

The goals mentioned above are in accord with the original conceptualization of an achievement goal—that is, they can provide a general purpose for pursuing success in a specific achievement activity. However, in achievement contexts such as classrooms, certain individuals are not interested in pursuing success or even in avoiding demonstrating poor ability;

they simply want to be left alone. To capture this orientation, researchers formulated another goal—one that is an apparent opposite of an "achievement goal orientation"—that was variously labeled "work avoidance" and "academic alienation" (Archer, 1994; Meece, Blumenfeld, & Hoyle, 1988; Nicholls et al., 1985; Nolen, 1988). The purpose associated with this goal is completing the work with as little expenditure of effort as possible or outsmarting the system and not doing the work. The behavioral patterns associated with work-avoidance goals seem similar to that of performance-oriented individuals with low perceived ability and mostly involve a negative pattern of cognition, affect, and behavior (Archer, 1994; Meece et al., 1988; Nicholls et al., 1985; Nolen, 1988; Skaalvik, 1997). However, the similar behavior of individuals pursuing work-avoidance goals and performance goals stems from different underlying meaning systems of the achievement situation. As Archer (1994) notes, "For alienated students, their interests and source of self-esteem lie in areas other than the classroom and so a proclaimed lack of effort is not a hedge to conceal lack of ability" (p. 432). This assumption is supported by low correlations between performance goals and a work-avoidance orientation (Skaalvik, 1997).

The inclusion of noncompetence goals in achievement goal theory opens the framework for the conceptualization of other goals that have been identified as motives for behavior (e.g., Ford, 1992). Thus, for example, it is possible to consider motives such as gaining control over others, exploring and establishing one's uniqueness and individuality, or pursuing equity and social justice as possible reasons for engagement in tasks in achievement settings. Whereas some of these goals may be more or less prevalent in academic settings, it is the identification of additional achievement goals that has raised the concern that mastery and performance goals may not be able to account for the richness and complexity of students' motivational processes. Clearly, this line of research favors a more comprehensive understanding of the complex processes that affect behavior in achievement settings over parsimony. Particularly in young adolescence, the issue of different types of social goals as reasons for coming to school (cf. Urdan & Hicks, 1995) and as orientations when doing schoolwork (Urdan & Maehr, 1995) and their antecedents and consequences requires extensive investigation.

Approach and Avoidance Motivations

In a recent development within achievement goal theory, Elliot (1997) argued for the integration of the classic framework of achievement needs into goal theory. In this theoretical integration, Elliot noted the distinction between approach and avoidance motivations (e.g., Atkinson, 1957) and

suggested that the inconclusive research findings concerning performance goals are the result of confounding the approach and avoidance aspects of performance goals (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). He suggested that performance goals should be differentiated to two distinct motivational orientations: performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals. When pursuing performance-approach goals, the person is oriented toward the desired possibility of demonstrating high ability and engages in the task with that purpose. When pursuing performance-avoidance goals, the person is oriented toward the undesired possibility of demonstrating low ability and engages in the task with the purpose of avoiding such a demonstration (Elliot, 1997, 1999; see also Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Skaalvik, 1997; Vandewalle, 1997).

In recent studies that employed the distinction between performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals, performance-avoidance goals were found to be consistently related to negative outcomes such as test anxiety, self-handicapping strategies, avoidance of help seeking, and low achievement. In contrast, performance-approach goals were mostly found to be related to positive outcomes such as task-engagement, positive attitude toward challenge, positive self-concept, self-efficacy, performance on tests, and even intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Skaalvik, 1997). Some studies, however, found performance-approach goals to have no relations with either positive or negative outcomes (e.g., Middleton & Midgley, 1997). And one recent study suggested that performance-approach goals may lead to adoption of performance-avoidance goals among some students when conditions in the educational environment change (Middleton, Kaplan, & Midgley, 2002; for reviews, see Elliot, 1999; Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001). Several researchers noted that these findings seem to imply that whether performance-approach goals would be associated with more or less adaptive outcomes among students might depend on the age of students and on the contexts in which they learn (Pintrich, 2000c). More specifically, research suggests that performance-approach goals may be more beneficial for late adolescents than for early adolescents (Bouffard, Vezeau, & Bordeleau, 1998). Presently, more research is needed about this issue (Midgley, Kaplan & Middleton, 2001).

Elliot (1999) and Pintrich (2000a) suggested recently that the approach-avoidance distinction could also be applied to mastery goals. Elliot (1999) suggested, for example, that mastery-avoidance—a concern with failure in mastery goals terms (e.g., being concerned with not being able to understand or with forgetting information)—could be common among the elderly, but may also be prevalent among perfectionists and professionals at the peak of their careers (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). It might also be possible to conceptualize mastery-avoidance among students,

for example, when they realize that they might not be able to learn the material in the time-allotted. At present, there is too little research on mastery-avoidance goals to indicate its prevalence among students or its usefulness for educators. In one of the few studies to examine mastery-avoidance goals to date, Elliot and McGregor (2001) found that, among college students, these goals were positively related to both mastery-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals. Mastery-avoidance goals were unrelated to either deep processing learning strategies or surface processing and also to exam performance. However, they were found to be related to disorganization in learning and to test anxiety, worry, and negative emotionality concerning doing well on a test.

Other goals can also be conceptualized as involving approach and avoidance components. Extrinsic goals, for example, could be conceptualized as extrinsic-approach—engagement with the desire to gain material goods—and as extrinsic-avoidance—engagement with the purpose of avoiding punishment. Social-approach goals could be conceptualized in such terms as establishing intimacy or a desired social belonging, whereas social-avoidance goals could be conceptualized as avoiding isolation and low social status. Similarly, individuality-approach goals could be thought of as pursuing a sense of oneself as unique and different, whereas individuality-avoidance would be engagement with the purpose of avoiding being perceived as similar to others or as conforming (see Ford, 1992). We can hypothesize that in each of these purposes for action there would be meaningful differences in the quality of engagement between students who focus on success and pursue the approach form of the purpose and students who focus on the possibility of failure and pursue the avoidance form of the purpose (cf. Carver & Scheier, 1998). Research that points to the importance of the distinction between approach and avoidance performance goals is accumulating (Elliot, 1999). Again, however, parsimony is lost in favor of a better description of the possible venues or pathways by which students can construe the meaning of achievement situations and the purposes that they can adopt for engagement and success in achievement tasks.

Multiple Goals

Another development in achievement goal theory emerged from research that suggested that mastery and performance goals are not mutually exclusive, but rather that students are able to and do pursue multiple goals. Whereas experimental studies typically manipulated participants to adopt one goal *or* the other, survey studies indicate that students often endorse items of different goal orientations to varying degrees (Ames & Archer, 1988; Harter, 1992; Meece & Holt, 1993; Nicholls, Patashnick, Cheung,

Thorkildsen, & Lauer, 1989; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991; Urdan, 1996). Indeed, in correlational research, individuals' endorsement of mastery goals is very often weakly positively related or unrelated to their endorsement of performance goals (Midgley et al., 1998; Nicholls et al., 1985; see discussion in Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996; Nicholls, Cheung, Lauer, & Patashnick, 1989), implying multiple configurations of different levels in the simultaneous pursuit of these two goal orientations. The few qualitative studies assessing students' achievement goals support the hypothesis that individuals endorse multiple achievement goal orientations (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 1997; Lee & Anderson, 1993; Levy, Kaplan, & Patrick, 2000).

The notion that students pursue multiple goals raised questions concerning the adaptive outcomes that are associated with the pursuit of various configurations of mastery and performance goals. In particular, researchers have been interested in the value of a combined mastery and performance orientation. Several studies attempted to delineate the behavioral patterns that are associated with endorsement of various configurations of goal orientations. The general finding is that pursuit of mastery goals, whether in combination with performance goals or not, is associated with an adaptive pattern of outcomes. The pursuit of performance goals as a single dominating orientation is associated with a more adaptive pattern of behavior than not pursuing any achievement goals; however, it is thought to be less adaptive than pursuit of any of the configurations involving mastery goals (see Bouffard, Boisvert, Vezeau, & Larouche, 1995; Duda, 1988; Harackiewicz, Barron, Carter, Lehto, & Elliot, 1997; Hofmann & Strickland, 1995; Meece & Holt, 1993; Pintrich, 2000c; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991; Seifert, 1995; Urdan, 1996).

The claim that performance goals—more particularly, performance-approach goals—may be adaptive in some contexts (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998) raised questions concerning the relative benefits of adopting a dominant mastery goals orientation in comparison to an orientation that combines high mastery and high performance-approach goals. Harackiewicz and her colleagues (1998; Barron & Harackiewicz, 2000; see also Elliot & Church, 1997) suggest, for example, that in a competitive context, performance-approach goals (pursued simultaneously with mastery goals or alone) would contribute to achievement and would not interfere with intrinsic motivation. Some findings even suggest that mastery and performance-approach goals may be contributing to different outcomes: mastery goals to the positive effect associated with learning and to deep processing of information and performance-approach goals to the achievement of standards (e.g., Barron & Harackiewicz, 2000; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 1999; Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999).[3]

However, so far, no explication has been suggested as to the psychological processes that are involved in adopting and pursuing multiple goal ori-

entations simultaneously (Pintrich, 2000a). Are persons switching back and forth between goal orientations in a situation, using mastery and performance goals intermittently? How does the notion of multiple goals relate to the definition of achievement goals as an integrated pattern of cognition, emotion, and behavior (cf. Ames, 1992a; Elliott & Dweck, 1988) or a comprehensive meaning in a situation (cf. Maehr, 1984; Molden & Dweck, 2000)? Are students constructing a meaning that combines aspects of several goal orientations? There is also much to be learned about the consequences of pursuing different configurations of goal orientations, and how this may differ among students from different cultures and groups, with different individual characteristics, and in different situations. Indeed, more recent research suggests that these relations may be quite complex, providing a further challenge to the parsimonious framework of achievement goal theory.

Complex Person x Situation Interactions

Recent research seems to imply that mastery and performance goals may not operate similarly for all individuals in all situations. Rather, findings seem to suggest that the relationships between goal orientations and cognition, affect, and behavior are moderated by personal characteristics such as dispositions to achievement motivation and age, situational characteristics such as the contextual emphasis on mastery and performance goals, and by the interaction between these two types of characteristics. For example, in a series of studies conducted with college students and involving the task of playing pinball, Harackiewicz and her colleagues (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1994; Harackiewicz & Elliot, 1993, 1998) found that whether achievement goals were related to interest and enjoyment of the task depended on participants' dispositional achievement motivation or alternatively on the congruence between the specific standards that they were asked to achieve (framed as mastery goals or performance goals standards) and the experimental condition: mastery or performance goals. Generally, the findings suggested that individuals with high achievement motivation enjoy engaging in the task under a performance goals condition more than under a mastery goals condition, whereas this was reversed among individuals with low achievement motivation. The findings also suggest that individuals enjoy the activity more when there is congruence between the specific standards that individuals are asked to achieve and the achievement goal that was emphasized in the experimental condition as framing the task—and this was found regardless of whether the achievement goal emphasized is mastery or performance. Barron and Harackiewicz (2000) replicated these findings in an experiment with college students that involved a mathemat-

ics task. In this study, an additional condition in which both achievement goals were emphasized produced moderate levels of interest among students high and low in achievement motivation.

Another recent study suggests that age may play a moderating role in the relations between achievement goals and outcomes. Findings by Bouffard and colleagues (1998) suggest that pursuit of both mastery and performance goals was associated with lower reports of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and with motivation in comparison to pursuit of only mastery goals among young students but not among older students. Barron and Harackiewicz (2000) suggest that with age and with increased experience in performance-oriented environments, students will develop the ability to integrate pursuit of both mastery and performance goals in an adaptive way. This suggestion seems also to highlight the role of the context in moderating the relations between different configurations of achievement goals and outcomes.

Similarly, research suggests that other individual differences, such as gender and ethnicity, may moderate the relations between achievement goals and outcomes. For example, Midgley and colleagues (1996) found that whereas performance goals were related to self-handicapping strategies among African American students, they were not related to these maladaptive behaviors among European American students. The work of Claude Steele and others (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Croizet & Claire, 1998) suggests that minority students and females who are aware of a negative stereotype of their group are likely to experience a "stereotype threat" under evaluative (performance-oriented) situations. This may make these students prone to ruminative worry that is detrimental to performance. Students who are not members of negatively stereotyped groups do not experience these detrimental drawbacks in the same achievement situations. Indeed, the findings from cross-cultural research reviewed above seem to suggest that achievement goals may have somewhat different meanings among students of different ethnic and cultural background (e.g., Kaplan & Maehr, 1999; McInerney et al., 1998).

This literature suggests that individual and group differences among students may interact with different contextual conditions to play important moderating roles on the relations between the emphasis on achievement goals in the learning environment, students' achievement goals, and cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes. Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2000) note that research that attends to these possible interactions leads to "a more complex but perhaps more realistic and ecologically valid view of the role of different goal orientations in learning and achievement" (p. 222). The very complex picture that emerges from the various research programs presented above seems to suggest that the interrelationships of mastery, performance, others' achievement goals, and their various config-

urations with adaptive and maladaptive educational outcomes should be investigated in particular populations of students, within specific learning environments. This understanding has led several researchers to call for the abandonment of the prevalent research methods in goal theory in favor of qualitative methods and a grounded theory perspective that allow the exploration of these unique motivational processes.

Grounded Theory

Recently, several researchers criticized the dominant research methods used in achievement goal theory that gave rise to the dichotomous conceptualization of mastery and performance goals. These researchers (e.g., Bempechat & Boulay, 2000; Dowson & McInerney, 2001) argue that experimental and survey methods do not reveal the complexity of students' motivational orientations and the meaning that students construe for achievement situations. For example, building on ideas from psychological anthropology and cultural psychology, and noting the responsibility of motivational researchers for informing practice in specific settings, Bempechat and Boulay (2000) critique theories that emphasize categories of motivational orientations and emphasize the need to investigate motivational processes through qualitative methods that reveal the unique meaning making of particular students in specific sociocultural contexts.

Similarly, Dowson and McInerney (2001) argue that research that assumes *a priori* categories of students' goals "may (a) artificially limit the range of goals investigated by researchers and (b) artificially limit descriptions of the content of these goals" (p. 35). In their research they assume a phenomenological approach that emphasizes the use of "the actual words of students" (p. 36) in order to explore students' motivational orientations. Using multimethods that involved open-ended conversations, semi-structured and structured interviews, and observations with 86 adolescents of different ages and from different schools, Dowson and McInerney found that goals, such as work avoidance goals, "had many 'faces' that varied according to specific classroom features" (p. 40), and that students see social goals in a complex way in which these goals often contribute but might also hinder engagement and achievement.

Other researchers using qualitative work also point to the complex meanings that achievement goals may have for students. For example, MacCallum (2000), who interviewed 10 students in the last year of primary school (Grade 7) and again in the first year of secondary school (Grade 8), identified "subtle differences in the focus of students' concerns" (p. 69) within goal categories. For example, in the ego (performance) goal category, students expressed concerns for performing well and impressing oth-

ers; however, they differed with regard to the level of standard of performance (e.g., being on top, performing well, performing at a reasonable standard, performing at a high standard, being recognized as smart informally, being recognized as smart formally, not appearing dumb) and their target of impression management concerns (e.g., peers, teachers, parents). In the task (mastery) goal category, students expressed concerns such as having interest in new tasks; having interest in new and different ideas; employing strategies to improve; concentrating and working hard; seeking help if needed; and exerting effort to understand and improve. In the work avoidant category, students expressed an orientation toward limiting effort; however, some students indicated that they do work if they like the subject or if the work is relevant, while others indicated that they limit their effort in all schoolwork. In the social goals category, students expressed such concerns as impressing teachers; impressing a wide audience; pleasing parents; getting support from parents, teachers, and peers; having anxiety about lack of support from peers; disliking support from peers; wanting status as a high achiever; wanting status as "different"; and accepting the responsibility of being a high achiever.

Clearly, qualitative work that emphasizes the meaning construction of individual students and of students in different sociocultural contexts suggests that there may be an infinite number of unique motivational orientations, that these orientations could interact in complex and idiosyncratic ways, and that what may seem as similar goal orientations may operate differently in different contexts. These findings seem to suggest that the focus on mastery and performance goals is limiting and misleading in trying to understand students' complex motivational processes. In regard to researchers' understanding of students' achievement goals and the way they affect cognition, emotion, and behavior, as well as the practical advice that can be given to practitioners for facilitating adaptive engagement, this line of research suggests that findings may be limited to the specific context in which a study was conducted.

An Interpretative Summary

In the past two decades, achievement goal theory has focused on two primary purposes for engagement in achievement tasks: mastery goals and performance goals. This parsimonious framework integrated much of the research findings concerning students' motivation at the time (see Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Legget, 1988; Maehr, 1989; Nicholls, 1984) and provided relatively clear guidelines for educational interventions that attempted to facilitate adaptive motivation (see Ames, 1990, 1992b; Maehr & Midgley, 1991, 1996). However, in the last five years or so, research suggested that

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the focus on these two goals is insufficient to explain the complex processes that lead students to engage in achievement tasks adaptively or maladaptively. The accumulating research that has examined the number and types of purposes that students can pursue in school settings and the moderating roles of various individual differences and contextual characteristics seems to highlight the idiosyncratic nature of motivational processes.

Achievement goal theory originated from an attempt to meaningfully reduce the meanings that students construe for achievement situations into a parsimonious framework that will allow the identification of processes leading to adaptive and maladaptive engagement. At this point, the research indicates that mastery and performance goals do not provide such broadly applicable meaningful categories, at least in any simple, consistent, and direct manner. Yet it could also be argued that the recent directions of research that criticize the original formulation of goal theory seem to divert somewhat from what arguably was the original conception of goal orientations. Whereas the original notion of achievement goals suggested that what is of concern is a comprehensive yet situated meaning of the action in the achievement situation (e.g., Ames, 1992a; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Maehr, 1984; see also Molden & Dweck, 2000; Nicholls, 1992), at least some recent research seems to employ a somewhat narrower definition in its operationalization of achievement goals. For example, a focus on different combinations of the environmental emphasis on achievement goals and the self-set achievement goals of students (cf. Barron & Harackiewicz, 2000) conceptualizes students' motivational orientations as *contributing* to the meaning of the situation (e.g., as manifested in a sense of a mismatch between personal and environment values) rather than as being *derived* from or as *an aspect of* this meaning. Similarly, attempting to explore the relations between achievement goals and social goals and how they interact to relate to adaptive and maladaptive behavior also implies that students' (various) goal orientations combine to form a certain meaning of the situation (e.g., a sense of coherence, or of a conflict, between the desire to do well in school and to be accepted by peers) rather than that the goal orientation *is* the cognitions, emotions, and behavior that emerge from and are an integral part of the meaning construed (cf. Maehr, 1984).

This view of achievement goals could be said to be more in line with perspectives on goals that emphasize goal content and define goals as "cognitive representations of what we hope to accomplish" (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2000, p. 231), or "*what* it is that an individual is trying to achieve in a given situation" (Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998, pp. 160–161). This perspective on goals is a worthy one and has provided the basis for comprehensive theories of human behavior (e.g., Ford, 1992; Murray, 1938), yet it is also limited in its ability to predict adaptive behavior by the need to specify all the goals that people may be pursuing in a certain context, and the

possible effects of different configurations of goals and the interaction of these various configurations with personal characteristics and contextual conditions. Indeed, it leads to the inevitable conclusion that motivational processes are unique to individuals who have particular individual characteristics and who learn in particular sociocultural environments.

Whereas a thorough qualitative investigation of the motivational processes, in particular educational environments, that results with insights concerning the interventions that could facilitate adaptive motivation in those settings is worthy and indeed desired, it seems that motivation theory should be able also to provide a more parsimonious framework that could guide researchers and practitioners in understanding the processes that lead students to engage meaningfully and deeply. Indeed, we believe that it is the responsibility of motivation researchers to seek such a framework. In the next section, we would like to propose a conceptualization that, while emphasizing the situated nature of motivational processes in sociocultural settings, attempts to integrate these understandings into a relatively parsimonious framework that could guide research as well as educational practice.

CONSTRUCTING ACHIEVEMENT GOALS IN THE CLASSROOM

The conceptualization that we present begins with the concept of achievement goal as the purpose for the activity that emerges from the situated meaning that the student construes. There are different theoretical approaches to the process of construction of a situated meaning. Some emphasize the role of the individual in this process, whereas others emphasize the role of the context. Some emphasize the importance of enduring characteristics (either of the individual or of the context), whereas others turn the light on the situated and transitory. In recent years, there have been different attempts at integrating these approaches to form a more complete picture of situated meaning making (e.g., Cobb, 1994; Martin & Sugarman, 1999; Moshman, 1982). The approach we espouse in this chapter suggests that the construction of meaning of action in a certain achievement situation employs individual as well as contextual processes. Each of these two components, however, has enduring as well as situated characteristics. Whereas they all play a role in the situated process of meaning construction, at different times, *depending on the situation* (e.g., whether it is a very familiar situation or not, or whether it involves content that touches on very important domains to the person or not), different aspects would assume a more significant role in affecting the meaning construed. In any event, however, the meaning and purpose of action construed is situated—

Figure 5.1. The processes contributing to the situated achievement goal orientation.

that is, it is recreated—in the situation. Such a perspective highlights the important role of educators in arranging situations that facilitate the construction of certain types of achievement goals over others.

Our model points to three major components that combine in the process of meaning construction to create the personal achievement goal: perceived purpose of action in a situation, self-processes, and perceived action possibilities (see Maehr, 1984). In the following sections we elaborate on the nature of each of the components and on the processes that contribute to their construction. Whereas the three components are presented serially, our perspective emphasizes the dynamic relations among them, as depicted in Figure 5.1. We understand the three components to operate and affect each other simultaneously in a process of which phenomenological aspect is that of adopting a personal purpose for action in an achievement situation.

Perceived Purpose in the Situation

The idea that people's achievement goals for action in a situation depend on what they understand the situation to be is logical. It is also supported by research (e.g., Kaplan & Maehr, 1999; Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). A question arises with regard to the way such perceptions of purpose in sit-

uations are formed. Research suggests that people have schemas of prototypical situations that are activated when a situation that is similar is encountered. These schemas involve, for example, goals of action and the appropriateness of certain behavior in the situation (e.g., Thorkildsen, 1989, 1991). They thus affect the way by which the purpose of behavior in the situation is interpreted (Cantor, Mischel, & Schwartz, 1982). There likely are individual differences in such schemas that are based on personality dispositions (McClelland, 1961). However, it is also clear that prototypical schemas of situations are construed through social interactions within sociocultural contexts (D'Andrade, 1990). The meaning of achievement situations, for example, is affected by the meaning of achievement in the cultural group (Maehr & Nicholls, 1980). Different discourse and practices socialize students to construe achievement situations as having different purposes and different goals for action (cf. Rogoff, 1994) and to have different emotions associated with such purposes (cf. Kitayama & Masuda, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Moreover, the effect of discourse on the purpose of achievement situations can be more localized than the context of an entire cultural group. Wertsch (1991), for example, characterizes the type of discourse that, together with the artifacts in the classroom, guides students' construction of the meaning of school, classroom, subject matter, and different situations. Wertsch notes that schools, perhaps more than other cultural institutions, have the goal of socializing students to use a particular discourse and to think in certain ways about what the purpose of being in school is all about. In asking questions such as "How many tens and how many ones are there in the top number?" (p. 112), teachers convey the message that the purpose of the situation is not gaining or obtaining information, but rather to get the student "to participate in formulating the problem in the 'right way'" (p. 112). When the discourse implies that the teacher knows the "right" answer, activities and learning assume purposes that are different from purposes of activities in which answers are not predetermined. In addition, the purpose of situations is construed through social negotiation. In school, this negotiation can occur between teacher and students, as when the teacher defines a new situation as having a certain meaning and the students ask questions and comment on the definition, and it can occur among students themselves, as when students explain to each other or debate the meaning of situations (e.g., Nicholls & Hazzard, 1993; Thorkildsen & Nicholls, 1991).

Thus, through sociocultural processes that guide them in appropriating cultural values, symbols, and tools, and through social constructivist processes that range from direct transmission to social negotiation, students construct understanding of the purpose of tests, contests, and multiple learning situations (e.g., silent reading, choice time, worksheet, group work, drawing). Students also construct prototypical understandings of the

purpose of learning a particular subject matter, under a certain teacher, and in school in general. Perceptions of purpose of typical classroom situations can be viewed from an achievement goal perspective as varying on dimensions such as emphasizing social comparison and relative ability (e.g., tests and contests), social collaboration and responsibility (e.g., collaborative group work), and exploring material and learning for its own sake (e.g., personal reading time).

However, in addition to the prototype, the situated aspect of perceptions of purpose also incorporates various characteristics of the particular situation, the social negotiation that takes place, and the situated emotions of students. Together these result in a comprehensive phenomenological experience of a purpose for a specific activity at a particular moment (cf. Hicks, 1994). Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989) go as far as to suggest that activities do not have a stable purpose: "Not only do the 'conditions for achieving the goal' change from situation to situation and over time in the same situation, but the goals also appear, disappear, and change. As children's actions are appropriated, the children's role in, and understanding of, the activity are modified" (p. 135).

Thus, prototypes of academic situations that are the result of cultural and contextual socialization can be "activated" to influence perceptions of purpose in a particular situation. However, situational and personal factors will vary the significance of a prototype to the situated meaning, and situated interaction can drastically change the meaning of an activity. In very ambiguous situations, when information cues, discourse, tools, and social interaction suggest that the purpose differs from that of a prototypical situation, students might construe a new purpose. In situations that are less ambiguous, situational features may still modify the prototypical purpose. The features of the situation and the purpose that is attached to it are an integral component of the continuous construction process of purpose of academic situations. Educators have much responsibility in designing environments and situations that send students messages concerning desired purposes of action—or what schooling should be about. The interventions already conducted (Ames, 1990; Maehr & Midgley, 1996) provide some guide in such practice. However, interventions that focus on the perceived purpose of the situation need to take account of other processes that combine to affect the personal achievement goals that students end up adopting. Perhaps the central one is self-processes.

Self-Processes

The second component in the dynamic process of the construction of purpose for action is the student's perceptions and sense of self. The self is a

general term that refers to a cognitive-affective dynamic structure that includes a vast amount of knowledge and evaluations that people have of themselves (Markus & Wurf, 1987). This dynamic system provides an interpretive frame for most significant events and behaviors of the person. The self has enduring characteristics that are affected by individual attributes such as innate dispositions (e.g., temperament), normative processes such as those related to developmental stage (Harter, 1983), as well as by enduring environmental effects (e.g., childrearing, cultural values) (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). However, the self is also reconstructed again and again in each situation, with different situations highlighting and activating different aspects of the self, which combine with the present experiences to create new self-understandings and self-evaluations (Gergen, 1991; Shotter, 1997). The aspects of the self that relate to the purpose of action in learning environments range from students' self-efficacy beliefs for performing the particular task (Pajares, 1996) to their social and cultural identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the implications of engaging in the activity to their acceptance by their cultural group and peers (see, e.g., Ogbu, 1992).

Cultures socialize students into constructing different enduring aspects of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Among members of collectivist cultures, collective aspects of self are likely to have higher levels of accessibility, and therefore to guide behavior in more situations. Among members of individualistic cultures, private aspects of self would be more accessible. Differential cultural treatments of individuals of different gender, ethnicity, SES, and other characteristics would result in different subcultural identities. Thus, students from different cultures and groups may be inclined to adopt different purposes that they perceive in the situation as personal achievement goals.

However, while cultures may facilitate chronic accessibility of certain aspects of self across many situations, characteristics of the situation have a critical role in the self-schemata that would be activated. The task structure (e.g., competition versus individualized work), content, social composition of the group, importance of the subject matter to the student, and social roles and norms would influence the dimension of self that is activated, the self-presentation that students will engage in, and the achievement goals that they will adopt (cf. Garcia & Pintrich, 1994; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Wurf, 1987). The norms and values of the situated group (e.g., of parents, same-gender peers, mixed-gender peers, able and competitive peers) would result in a differential activation of private and public self-aspects. The distinctiveness of a certain attribute in the situation (e.g., gender, ethnicity, academic ability) may direct students' attention to different self-schemata. Depending on the construction of the self-aspect that is activated (e.g., a girl's gender identity that involves uneasiness with academic

success), the student may construe a personal purpose for the activity that adopts or rejects the perceived purpose of the situation. Furthermore, impression management will differ according to the values of the situated group, and thus prompt students to adopt different norms, some that might be in conflict with those of the main culture or with learning. In particular situations, therefore, students from collectivist cultures may still adopt achievement goals, such as performance goals, which are generally less valued in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures. Once a self-aspect has been activated, it is prone to be reconstructed through social processes such as social interaction and social comparison, and through individual processes such as self-observation. The construction also depends on individual differences such as personal dispositions, developmental stage, familiarity with the task, and prior knowledge in the domain. Educators should be aware of the self-related issues that are significant for their students. This is particularly important during adolescence, when self-understanding and self-exploration are becoming central in students' lives (Erikson, 1968). Such awareness by educators can facilitate the design of activities that would concern students' self-relevant issues and contribute to adoption of purposes for action that concern self-development and exploration. We elaborate on this issue later on.

Garcia and Pintrich (1994) contend that the self-schema is the mental structure that integrates motivational beliefs with behavioral strategies that result in learning. The activation of certain self-aspects is directly related to the norms that would be activated, and thus affect behavior. For example, when a gender identity becomes salient in a situation, cultural norms that are attached to this identity also become salient. These norms could be critical in guiding the orientation and the behavior of the student. The repertoire of behavioral strategies that students have available and are willing to perform is the third critical component in the adoption of a purpose as a personal achievement goal.

Action Possibilities

Action possibilities are "the behavioral alternatives or options that a person perceives to be available to him or her in any given situation" (Maehr, 1984, p. 124). When thinking about the behaviors that students can engage in so as to accomplish the various goals that they pursue in school, this category needs to be highly inclusive (cf. Garcia & Pintrich, 1994). Three assumptions have to be met for a student to perceive a behavior as a possible action. One is that the behavior has to be available—the student needs to have it in his or her repertoire. Another is that the behavior has to

become an option in a given situation. Finally, the student has to adopt the behavior as suitable for him or her in a given situation.

Maehr (1984; Maehr & Braskamp, 1986) contends that "opportunity"—experiencing environments (e.g., culture, family, school) that provide exposure to multiple domains and that support individual reflection on and transfer of strategies—is the necessary but not sufficient foundation for the development of availability, awareness, and enactment of behavior. However, in addition to providing exposure and support for exploration, cultural and social environments could be active and directive in the socialization of behavior. Through participation in cultural practices, students appropriate norms and strategies, build a repertoire, and acquire guides for culturally appropriate usage (Rogoff & Lave, 1984). In addition, discrimination of people from different genders and ethnic groups may facilitate perceptions of options as limited. Indeed, prevalent power relations in societies manifest in organizational practices that limit opportunities for individuals from certain groups and influence these individuals' outcome expectations and motivational orientations (Delpit, 1988; Foucault, 1980; Goodnow, 1990; cf. Schunk, 1989).

The adoption of a certain behavior or strategy (e.g., to relate the material to previously learned knowledge, or to seek help when it is needed) is a fundamental element in students' achievement goals. A critical characteristic of this adoption is the level of internalization—or, in other words, the perceived origin—of the behavior (cf. Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Strategies can be perceived as originating in the self (i.e., "I want to do this"), in an internal reference group (i.e., "I should be doing this"), or in an external reference group (e.g., "They force me to do this"). Garcia and Pintrich (1994) note that socialization of the self and its differentiation to multiple distinct self-schemata also involves socialization of distinct strategies that concern becoming, maintaining, and avoiding becoming particular selves. Thus, the motivational force aroused by an activation of a certain aspect of self (e.g., the desire to become "a good student in math") would be manifested in the use of particular strategies (e.g., math learning strategies, math class norms of behavior, math teacher pleasing behavior). The self-perspective taken (e.g., an internal reference group or a public-self) when a certain self-schema is activated would affect the norms and strategies that this self-schema is associated with, and thus affect the achievement goal adopted.

Schools are major agents in this enculturation. Through the control of the opportunities that children have to view and explore different behavior, cultures—and schools within cultures—allow the construction of a repertoire in which various possible strategies are available but others are not. Students appropriate strategies that they receive from the teacher, that they see peers perform, and that they construct collaboratively as they solve

problems in groups. Individual differences that range from demographic characteristics such as gender and ethnicity to motivational dispositions and level of ability would influence these interactions and result in modified construction of strategies. The individual construction of strategies will also be influenced by personal characteristics such as previous knowledge, level of ability, and affect.

The construction and mastering of behavior and strategies would provide the student the necessary but not sufficient conditions for engaging deeply in the academic task. Situational characteristics that would influence the goal of the activity and the activation of certain self-aspects that might be conducive or disruptive to academic engagement would interact with availability and awareness of strategies to determine the purpose that the student will adopt in the activity and the manner by which she will pursue the purpose.

Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

Understanding motivation as a dynamic process by which enduring and situated characteristics of the context and the individual combine to affect the meaning of the situation that the person construes—a meaning of which the central component is the purpose of action—emphasizes the dependence of motivational processes on the particular nature of the individuals and of the sociocultural contexts and situations in which they act. This model also suggests that investigation of motivational processes should involve a significant exploratory element that enables the unique meanings of situations and purposes of action that are specific to each sociocultural context to emerge. However, unlike the perspective that calls for abandoning generalizations and focusing on grounded theory, this model also offers a coherent conceptual tool for understanding motivational processes across sociocultural contexts. It highlights meaning-construction processes that operate among any group of people in any setting and thus it provides anchors for focused investigations as well as for targeted interventions.

So what does all that say about motivating students to "do what needs to be done"? One important implication is the understanding that students' "doing" or "acting" is inseparable from the purpose for action that they construe in the situation. Moreover, this purpose depends on the way the learning environment defines achievement and success and on the way students' identity—those self-processes that are highlighted in the situation—relates to these environmental definitions. The process of facilitating adaptive motivation should be conceived of as a complex transaction between the environment and the students. Therefore, in the process of searching

for ways to motivate students, practitioners should first engage in exploring and defining what they believe achievement and success should be in their setting and which behaviors should contribute to this success—a process that is difficult but essential (Maehr & Midgley, 1996; Urdan, Midgley, & Wood, 1995). They then should figure whether their learning environments indeed emphasize these definitions to their students and whether their students would adopt them as purposes for action. Finally, educators should change the meanings that are sent to students by transforming the school culture (Kaplan & Maehr, 1997; Maehr & Midgley, 1996) so that it emphasizes and socializes students to adopt those desired purposes.

Clearly, success in such an endeavor requires good familiarity with the specific content of each of the three components that are involved in the construction of students' achievement goals. This means that educators should develop an understanding of the ways by which specific groups of students perceive different academic situations. They should also be familiar with the self-related issues that these students are concerned with and that would become salient in academic situations. Finally, educators should realize the repertoire of behaviors that students who belong to different subgroups perceive as available and legitimate in different contexts. It seems almost inevitable that a process that requires such familiarity of the psychological life of students would necessitate getting input from the students themselves, and perhaps even involve students in the process of designing the educational environments that would encourage them to adopt purposes that contribute to success. This too is not an easy process and should be conducted with the characteristics of the particular educational setting and of the students in mind. Perhaps in no other stage in students' lives is this task more difficult and yet crucial than in adolescence.

FACILITATING ADAPTIVE ACHIEVEMENT GOALS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Our model suggests that investigations and interventions that concern the purposes of action that students construe should focus on the transaction between the characteristics of students and those of the context. It is important, therefore, that efforts that aim to change adolescents' perceptions and adoption of purpose in school take into consideration the characteristics of this developmental stage and the unique ways by which these characteristics manifest in specific sociocultural groups. A familiarity with the characteristics of adolescence provides an important starting point for the exploration of these transactional processes, which take place in educational environments that serve students of this age group.

Adolescence is characterized by an increase in cognitive capacities (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958) as well as an enhanced focus on self-processes and identity issues (Adams, Gullota, & Montemayor, 1992). Research conducted in the United States also highlights the increased need of American adolescents as compared to children for self-management and autonomous expression and for establishing relationships with adults that are not parents (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Eccles et al., 1993).[3] This research suggests that the common drop in academic motivation and well-being among early adolescents as they make the transition from elementary school to middle school (or junior high) can be related to a mismatch between the characteristics of the junior high school learning environments and those needs and abilities of early adolescents. The typical junior high environment provides less challenging activities, puts more emphasis on social comparison, allows fewer opportunities to self-manage, and facilitates more impersonal teacher–student relationships than elementary schools do (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Eccles et al., 1993). Of particular interest is that studies suggest that such changes in the characteristics of the learning environment are associated with a decrease in students' perceptions of emphasis on mastery goals (Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995). These changes are also associated with downward shifts in early adolescents' self-perceptions of ability and self-esteem (Eccles et al., 1993). Early adolescents who made the transition to middle-level schools that were facilitative of their needs did not experience the declines in self-perceptions of ability, self-esteem, and liking of schoolwork. These students' liking of school actually increased (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989a, 1989b). More recent research suggests that similar processes operate in the transition from middle-level school to high school, although findings also highlight some change from early to middle adolescence in the transaction between the educational environment and the developmental characteristics of students (see Middleton, Midgley, Gheen, & Kumar, 2002). Clearly, in order to facilitate a positive attitude, receptiveness, and responsiveness to the messages emphasized in the environment among adolescents, educators should first and foremost create contexts that provide support for their developmental needs.

Perhaps the important characteristic of adolescence that distinguishes it as unique from other age groups with regard to the processes described in our model is the changes in self-structure and processes and in attention to self and identity. Researchers suggest that the self-construct changes from a structure that is hierarchically organized during childhood and early adolescence, to an unstable and less integrated structure composed of unrelated components during middle adolescence, to a multifaceted, differentiated but not hierarchical structure in late adolescence (Wigfield, Eccles, & Pintrich, 1996). The instability of the self-structure, which is

accompanied by a heightened self-focus, is a manifestation of the main developmental task associated with adolescence—exploring and constructing an identity (Erikson, 1968). The focus on self-processes and heightened self-awareness make adolescents prone to be especially sensitive to the implications of behaviors for their sense of self and for the way they are perceived by others (Elkind & Bowen, 1979; Nicholls, 1984). Therefore, interventions that aim at encouraging adolescents to adopt certain purposes for action and employ certain behaviors toward certain goals should involve consideration of the implications of these purposes and the associated behaviors for adolescents' concerns about self-perception and impression management (cf. Covington, 1992). Thus, for example, if the goal is to encourage adolescents to perceive the learning environment as emphasizing meaningful learning and to adopt this purpose as their achievement goal, it is crucial that educators make an effort to create contexts in which investing, exploring, helping, making mistakes, and taking on challenges have positive rather than negative implications in students' eyes.

The characteristics of the environment that would facilitate positive attitudes among students toward the purposes emphasized in the context depend on the particular issues and processes in the identity formation of adolescents. However, the processes of exploring the self and constructing an identity take different forms among adolescents of different ages, genders, cultures, and historical times (see Adams et al., 1992). For example, Kegan (1982) notes that among early adolescents, social relationships provide a fundamental defining characteristic of the self and play an organizing, formative role in the interpretation of situations; whereas among older adolescents, social relationships become an aspect of a more general and complex self-definition (see also Urdan & Hicks, 1995). As another example, Schiedel and Marcia (1985) suggest that in the process of constructing an identity, the issue of intimacy is related differently to the self among men and women. Whereas among men, identity and intimacy are organized in a step-like order, among women, these issues are merged. In addition to these differences in content, adolescents of different genders and cultures and of different dispositions go about the process of exploring and establishing their identity differently, employing different strategies of self-exploration (e.g., Berzonsky, 1992; Flum, 1994; Josselson, 1987).

As the foregoing review suggests, in addition to individual differences, the issues and processes involved in self-exploration and identity construction would also be very much dependent on the specific social environment and the unique social identities that are formed in the particular setting (cf. Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Particular contexts and situations that highlight such characteristics as majority and minority, social status, ethnicity, and immigrant status are all potentially influential in the self-processes

that become salient for students and in the meaning of these self-processes to engagement in action. Being familiar with the issues and the processes that adolescents engage in as they explore self and identity could highlight for educators the content and structure of tasks that would encourage these particular adolescents to perceive and adopt the achievement goal that is emphasized. Such familiarity, for example, could highlight for educators the orientation of particular groups of students to interpret situations along certain dimensions (e.g., certain types of social issues such as discrimination) and the boundaries that adolescents perceive with regard to employing publicly certain behaviors (e.g., individual seat-work, collaboration across social status groups).

In summary, attention to the self-relevant processes and issues of adolescents is critical for understanding when and why they might adopt or reject the pursuit of achievement in school. It is also important for the design of environments that could facilitate the construction of adaptive purposes for learning. Clearly, such a process may result with different definitions of achievement and of success in different sociocultural contexts and in different educational institutions. Indeed, it is this malleability of the three goal components that allows this meaning construction and its dynamic and continuous revision as the situation changes.

CONCLUSION

Not surprisingly, the extensive interest in the topics covered in this chapter have created a complex picture of motivation. The initial studies that gave rise to achievement goal theory were largely simple in design and more often than not straightforward in results—and most researchers were all too willing to generalize findings across multiple contexts and persons. Findings of recent research have humbled us and also have stimulated some to search in new directions and hazard new interpretations and hypotheses. For our part, we have stumbled to the conclusion that research must refocus on the situation in which motivation arises. That was once said for practical reasons: Motivation theory is of little value to practitioners unless it speaks to motivation change over which they have some control. Increasingly, it also makes good theoretical sense, as we consider the situated nature of cognition and keep in mind that our most theoretically as well as practically useful constructs regarding motivation remain those that have to do with meaning: thoughts and emotions about purpose, self, and action alternatives. In order to explore those situated meanings, we emphasized the inseparability of the students from their environment. And for the facilitation of adaptive motivation, it is the inseparability of the environment from the students that needs to be emphasized. It is particularly

with adolescents that such a conceptualization of motivational processes provides tools for the understanding of the situated transaction between people and environment. The concurrent occurrence of changes associated with puberty, increase in cognitive abilities, heightened focus on self and identity, and environmental transitions from elementary school to middle-level schools, to high schools, and then to college or the workforce leaves the adolescent particularly vulnerable to academic and socioemotional difficulties that have lasting implications for adult life (Wigfield et al., 1996). However, research accumulates that suggests that when educational environments are facilitative of adolescents needs, school can become a place where adolescents are motivated to learn. Moreover, the research also points to the strong positive links between adolescents' motivation in school and their well-being (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Thus, facilitating adaptive motivation among adolescents assumes a significance that is beyond their school achievement. Our model suggests that this task is quite difficult, but whoever said that understanding and intervening with human nature should be easy? We conclude with the hope that this chapter raised an idea or two that might generate further investigation regarding the nature of human motivation.

NOTES

1. Some of the goals were defined slightly differently from the way achievement goals have been defined. Rather than asking "why" are students trying to achieve on the academic task, these goals were conceptualized by their content and as representations of end states, that is, as "what" students are trying to achieve in school (see Wentzel, 1992).
2. Theorists focusing on goal content suggested that in addition to the simultaneous pursuit of mastery and performance goals, other goals, such as social goals, would also be pursued (Wentzel, 1992).
3. Recent research suggests that some of these characteristics also appear among adolescents in non-Western societies that are experiencing cultural change (e.g., Choo & Tan, 2000).

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